

# GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2023

## 1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

**Geopark name, country, regional Network:** Itoigawa

UNESCO Global Geopark

(Japan, Asia-Pacific Geoparks Network)

**Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation:**

Inscribed 2009 / Last Revalidation 2021\*

\*Revalidation mission realized in 2022 due to COVID-19



Reading Panels about Geological Material Conservation at Commemorative Exhibition

## 2. GEOPARK FIGURES

**Number of Geopark staffs:** 16 staffs including 5 geoscientists and 2 archaeologists

**Number of visitors:** 86,150 (Visitors to Fossa Magna Museum)

**Number of Geopark events:** 12 (3 by management body, 9 by cooperating organizations)

**Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes:** 100 schools (634 classes)

• Including school excursions visiting the Geopark: 70 schools (3,740 students)

**Number of Geopark press release:** 120 (Fax, email, homepage, social media, newsletter)

## 3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

### Major achievements in 2023

- Special project to promote jade, which was designated as the Official Stone of Niigata Prefecture, including a one year anniversary exhibition..
- Held the "Itoigawa Summer 'Rock' Festival" with the local Tourism Association, promoting a variety of activities and products themed on Itoigawa's geodiversity.
- Established a garden at Fossa Magna Museum for planting donated Itoigawa Shimpaku trees.

### Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- Actively participated in the International Conference of UNESCO Global Geoparks in Marrakech, including oral presentations on conservation and use of jade in Itoigawa Geopark and progress made toward the promotion of responsible quarry operation within the Geopark.
- Participated and aided in the facilitation of the APGN Online Exchange Series (4 times)
- Held online student exchange and in-person staff visits with Sister Geopark in Hong Kong.
- Arranged investigatory missions for delegations from Ghana (March) and the Pacific Tourism Organization (October) to promote geopark development in Africa and Small Island Developing States.
- Began investigation of possible sistering opportunities with Geoparks in Europe. (Katla, etc)

## **Management and Financial Status**

- Management remains stable through the Itoigawa Geopark Council, consisting of 34 member organizations including national and local government bodies, local commercial and tourist organizations, local resident groups, transportation companies and universities. These organizations assist in the management and activities of the Itoigawa Geopark through five working groups: "Education & Disaster Risk Reduction," "Preservation & Conservation," "Community Development," "Tourism" and "Project Management."
- Geopark finances remain stable. Direct funding from local government authorities is supplemented through merchandise sales. New projects make use of available national, local and private grants whenever feasible.

## **Geoconservation**

- Dialogue held with the operators of a mineral show within the area of the Geopark to explain importance of responsible and sustainable use of geological materials in accordance with Geopark Principles. Panels created by the Geopark were displayed at the entrance of the mineral show (See Photograph).
- In preparation for the new Site Registration System's full implementation in 2024, a shrine dedicated to the worship of an intrusive andesitic boulder was approved as a model case.

## **Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)**

- A "workcation" promotion event was held focused on disaster resilience and food culture.
- Co-hosted the "MontBell Sea to Summit" triathlon event with neighboring cities. The kayaking portion was held at Benten-Iwa Rock. (Jul 15 - 16)

## **New education programmes on geoconservation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction**

- Implemented the 3<sup>rd</sup> Term of the Itoigawa Unified Education Policy, creating the "Pick-up Class Plan" which aims to provide easy-to-use lesson plans for new educators.

## **Strategic partnership**

- As part of the jade promotion project, we collaborated with major beverage manufacturer Suntory to host a free giveaway of thematic cocktails made using "Sui Gin." The "Sui" in the gin's name is the same as the character in "hisui," the Japanese word for jade.
- Signed a comprehensive agreement with outdoor goods manufacturer MontBell to facilitate further cooperation in the promotion of outdoor activities.

### Promotional activities

- Itoigawa Geopark coordinated Geoparks and Aspiring Geoparks in Japan to create the "Earth Time Journey Exhibition" which will be exhibited in over 30 museums across Japan.
- Cooperated with a celebrity from Itoigawa to produce a video promoting jade.
- Successfully petitioned the local government to implement new regulations for the conservation of rare plants and animals. Installed a monument at Kotakigawa Jade Gorge to promote conservation of the rare endemic snail 'murayama-maimai' (*Euhadra murayamai*).
- Installed a monument designed by local children to promote the Fossa Magna and Itoigawa-Shizuoka Tectonic Line where the fault crosses a local major road.

### 4. CONTACTS

**Manager:** Ōnishi, Manabu    [geopark@city.itoigawa.lg.jp](mailto:geopark@city.itoigawa.lg.jp)

**Geologist:** Takenouchi, Kō    [museum@city.itoigawa.lg.jp](mailto:museum@city.itoigawa.lg.jp)